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Public Hearing Testimony on Proposed Day Care Rules

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The Office of Children and Adult Licensing in early 2004 initiated the process of updating the current licensing rules for family/group day care homes and day care centers. PA116 requires that all rules promulgated under the act are subject to a review not less than once every five years.

Rule advisory committees were formed with membership consisting of childcare providers, policy makers, advocates, parents and other interested parties. This office understands the rulemaking process needs to be a partnership with the community. These committees (one addressing center rules and one addressing family/group home rules) were charged with reviewing the current family/group child care home and center rules and proposing changes that would strengthen quality of care, impose child safety and promote child learning environments.

The rule promulgation process requires that statewide public hearings be held to receive broad community input regarding the proposed rules. Recognizing the value of community input this office convened a public forum in the fall of 2004 to gather public reaction. In response to comments received in this forum significant changes were made in the proposed rules. The official public hearings were held during the first two weeks of March 2005 in the cities of Marquette, Traverse City, Grand Rapids, Livonia and Alma. 265 individuals representing family/group home child care providers, parents and child care advocates attended the hearings and provided input on the proposed rules. Staff from this office along with rule committee members informally answered questions and comments regarding these proposed rules following these hearings. The recommendation and concerns raised will now go to the family/group home rules advisory committee for them to begin the task of assimilating recommendations into the proposed rules. It is anticipated this community input will strengthen the proposed rules and ensure that child care in Michigan is safe, and of high quality.

During the public hearings there were several proposed rules that received significant attention both in support as well as in opposition. The proposed family/group home rules state that caregivers be required to obtain 10 clock hours of training annually and that their assistant caregivers obtain 5 clock hours of training annually. Current rules require no training. Nationally Michigan ranks last with two other states requiring no training. Public hearing testimony recorded

22 individuals who voiced support for the training requirement and 12 individuals who objected.

Some of the comments heard in opposition were "I've been in this business a long time, I don't need any training"...I don't have enough time to attend training...working 70-80 hours a week"... "can't afford the cost of training" In support of training some stated "even as an experienced provider I find training valuable"...."training makes my job easier".

Training in child development and program planning is offered by the following organizations.

Michigan Community Coordinated Child Care (4C) and Regional 4C offices

- DHS currently provides this organization with funding
- 6800 providers were training in FY 2003
- 8700 providers are estimated to be training 2004
- offerings at little or no cost

Michigan Association for the Education of Young Children

- Annual statewide conference

Michigan Providers Alliance

- Annual conference

National Association for Family Child Care

Michigan Department of Community Health

- Child care expulsion training

Michigan Department of Education

- Hosts statewide conferences

Michigan Association for Infant Mental Health

Workshops and courses offered by local intermediate school districts, colleges and universities

Online training offerings

This office and the rules advisory committee believe that trained child care providers are better able to prevent, recognize and correct health and safety issues as well as offer a learning environment for children. Ten clock hours of annual training is reasonable.